



Stilgebauer Award 2010 – Application Form

Please provide the information below. This application form needs to accompany the Project Summary for the project to be considered for a Stilgebauer award. Individuals or teams may complete the required information for their own project(s) or for another teacher or group's project	
Project Name: <i>Facilitating a Learner-centered Environment in the Classroom</i>	
School Regional Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> North Cook <input type="checkbox"/> South Cook <input type="checkbox"/> West 40
District Name: <i>Northbrook School District</i>	
District No.: <i>28</i>	
Name(s)-Teams with up to 5 members will be accepted! Include all names.	Email Address(s)
* <i>Julie Meierdirks</i>	* <i>jmeierdirks@northbrook28.net</i>
*	*
*	*
*	*
*	*
School Name	<i>Northbrook Junior High School</i>
School Street Address	<i>1475 Maple Avenue</i>
School City, State, Zip	<i>Northbrook, IL 60062</i>
School Phone Number	<i>(847) 498-7920</i>
If you are providing information to nominate another teacher or group, please provide your information below (if different from those named above).	
Nominator's Name	
Nominator's Phone #	
Best Contact Time	
Nominator's Email	

Please attach the Project Summary to this form and send to Learning Technology Center One Central at 2701 W. Washington Blvd., 2nd Floor, Bellwood, IL 60104

Facilitating a Learner-centered Environment in the Classroom

Project Abstract: For this project students worked in a learner-centered environment created by the teacher managed through the use of Moodle. Utilizing resources such as podcasts, flipcharts and PowerPoints, students interacted with the curriculum while developing their collaboration and problem-solving skills in the classroom. Their final products showcased their knowledge and understanding of the content they were reviewing from the previous year.

Grade level: 7th grade

Subject areas: World Languages (Language Arts, Mathematics)

Technology resources: Moodle, Web 2.0, Garageband, Powerpoint/Keynote, Pages/Microsoft Word, Flip video cameras, Promethean interactive whiteboards and ActivInspire software.

Other materials: Textbooks, French-English dictionaries

ISTE STANDARDS:

Creativity and Innovation: Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.

Communication and Collaboration: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

Research and Information Fluency: Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information.

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources.

Digital Citizenship: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

Technology Operations and Concepts: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations.

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS:

Foreign Language State Goal 28: Use the target language to communicate within and beyond the classroom setting.

Foreign Language State Goal 30: Use the target language to make connections and reinforce knowledge and skills across academic, vocational and technical disciplines.

Language Arts State Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

Mathematics State Goal 6: Demonstrate and apply a knowledge and sense of numbers, including numeration and operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), patterns, ratios and proportions.

Process: I started by developing review units in Moodle, each one focusing on a key concept learned in the previous year. Within each concept I created student-centered technology activities that addressed specific grammar and vocabulary. For examples; in one key concept, numbers, students were expected to answer questions from a French podcast about birthdays, use an ActivInspire flipchart to create a calendar of their activities with dates, and incorporate mathematical concepts to create equations using numbers they chose as special, then showcasing these in a Keynote slideshow. This review also included collaboration with the math teacher, as she provided the “expert” knowledge the students needed to complete that project. All work was completed through the Moodle and other technology resources and students monitored and managed their groups’ progress. Similarly, in the alphabet review, students listened to authentic French podcasts about names and greetings, then demonstrated their understanding by answering

questions in Moodle. In small groups they also wrote and recorded their own podcast based on the ones they had heard. For their final product, students showcased their vocabulary by creating a visual alphabet book using a Keynote slideshow. This review provided an opportunity to consult with the drama teacher, as he guided the students during their podcast recordings and helped them with their expressive language skills. Lastly, in the verb review, students were asked to create a unit to teach basic verb conjugations. They were allowed to use whichever technology resources they wanted as long as the unit contained an introductory lesson, an interactive small-group activity and an independent practice. Students were encouraged to use visuals and audio in their lesson; however, each group was allowed to choose how to present each segment of the lesson. Students had to collaborate in their groups to delegate the different aspects of the lesson, yet each person was available to consult for advice and opinions when needed. Students utilized Keynote, podcasts, Garageband and Flip videos to develop their projects. Their final task was to write a lesson plan for me to use as I presented each unit.

Integration: This project provided many opportunities for the students to collaborate and communicate with each other. By creating an environment in the classroom that was student-centered, my students were able to create a sense of ownership for their group's final projects. They had more control over their learning than in a traditional classroom, thus they were expected to draw upon their higher level thinking skills to solve problems and think creatively within the group. They were put into an environment not unlike the current workplace and asked to complete a task together. They were responsible for all aspects of the project, including delegating tasks and time management. While some groups flourished in this setting, others needed interventions to get individual members to work collectively. My role as teacher became one of project facilitation rather than dissemination of information. I was able to let the students guide their own learning of the concepts and create projects that reflected their group's own identity. As a result of this project, students also realized that French stretches beyond the boundaries of the curriculum and can be easily integrated into other content areas. They also enjoyed the opportunity to showcase their learning and marvel at what their classmates had developed as well.

Reflection: The biggest impact this project has had on the way I teach is the realization that I don't have to be at the center of my students' learning. It was amazing to see the scope of their projects once they understood that I would allow them to control their own learning. The students became self-sufficient and completely engaged in their projects; in fact, I often had to pull them away so they could make it to their next class on time. They truly enjoyed the real-world learning environment and how it reflected a modern workplace. They were also enthralled with the authenticity of their learning tasks and how seamless these became integrated into other content areas. It made sense to the students that I would ask them to create a schedule as part of a review of numbers, since telling time is an integral part of any schedule. As a result of this project, I have completely restructured the physical space in my classroom and now utilize technology on a daily basis. I allow the students to work together in groups regularly and ask them to problem-solve the reasons behind the content we are learning. I try to incorporate authenticity in my lessons by making connections to everyday French life. I also welcome the expertise of my colleagues in other academic areas and ask for their input when creating a task or assignment. I've collaborated with the English teachers for ideas on improving writing skills and asked the science teachers to help with a vocabulary unit to practice weather terminology. Although the initial set-up of this review unit took many hours of my time, the lasting impact on the students' attitudes towards learning has been worth all of the effort.